

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-20 JUSE-00 L-03 H-03 TAR-02 SWF-02

SP-03 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-07 RSC-01 CIEP-03 TRSE-00

SS-20 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-03

INR-11 NSAE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 LAB-06 SIL-01 PRS-01

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TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 177555

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, PN

SUBJECT: DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN UNITED BRANDS AND DEPARTMENT -
ADDITIONAL POINTS

REFERENCE: 174668

1. TWO ADDITIONAL POINTS WERE RAISED IN SUBJECT DISCUS-
SIONS. THEY WERE OMITTED FROM ORIGINAL CABLE DUE TO
TIMING PROBLEMS AND OUR DESIRE TO TRANSMIT REFERENCE
CABLE AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE MOMENT.

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2. FIRST POINT WAS THE STATEMENT BY THE UNITED BRANDS REPRESENTATIVES THAT THEY COULD LIVE QUITE WELL WITH THE ONE DOLLAR PER BOX TAX IN PANAMA IF ECUADOR WOULD IMPOSE A ONE DOLLAR PER BOX TAX AS AGREED. THIS WAS TOUCHED ON SEVERAL TIMES. ON MONDAY MORNING (AUGUST 12) JASPER BAKER OF UNITED BRANDS CALLED THE DEPARTMENT TO BE SURE WE HADN'T MISSED THIS STATEMENT. WE MADE NO COMMENT EITHER DURING THE FRIDAY (AUGUST 9) DISCUSSIONS OR TO BAKER'S FAR FROM SUBTLE REITERATION.

3. COMMENT: OUR ONLY RESPONSE TO BAKER'S PHONECALL WAS TO ASK WHETHER UNITED WAS BUYING FRUIT PRESENTLY FROM ECUADOR. HE SAID HE "DIDN'T BELIEVE THEY WERE AT THE MOMENT." THIS RAISES IN OUR MINDS THE POSSIBILITY THAT ONE OF UNITED BRANDS' NEGOTIATING OBJECTIVES IN PANAMA MAY BE TO FORCE TORRIJOS INTO AN ALL OUT ATTEMPT TO GET ECUADOR TO IMPOSE

THE ONE DOLLAR PER BOX TAX WHICH, OF COURSE, WOULD THEN PUT UNITED BRANDS BACK ON AN EVEN BASIS WITH STANDARD BRANDS. WE SEE NO REASON, OF COURSE, FOR U.S.G. TO GET INVOLVED IN THAT GAME.

4. ALSO DURING CONVERSATION FRIDAY UNITED BRANDS REPRESENTATIVES STATED AT SEVERAL POINTS, ALWAYS PRECEDED BY A DISCLAIMER OF ANY WISH TO INTERFERE IN INTERNAL GOP AFFAIRS, THAT THEY WISHED THEY COULD FIND SOMEWAY TO NEGOTIATE WITH SOMEONE OTHER THAN MANFREDO. THEY ACCUSED MANFREDO OF DOUBLE-DEALING, AMONG OTHER THINGS. TAYLOR STATED THAT UNITED BRANDS PREVIOUSLY HAD BEEN ABLE TO GET TO TORRIJOS, IN CASES OF NECESSITY, THROUGH PRESIDENT LAKAS BUT THAT LAKAS HAS NOW TOLD THEM HE CAN NO LONGER BE OF ASSISTANCE TO THEM IN THIS MATTER. WE, OF COURSE, MADE NO COMMENT ON THIS POINT. KISSINGER

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